

EDINA PARK BOARD
7:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
APRIL 11, 2000

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dave Fredlund, Chuck Mooty, Karla Sitek, George Klus, Andy Finsness, Scot Housh, Linda Presthus

MEMBERS ABSENT: Andy Herring, Tom White, Floyd Grabiell, John Murrin

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Janet Canton

OTHERS PRESENT: Ron Clark, Wally Case, Dan Young Dixon, Spencer Marsh, Jack Abrahamson, Jennifer Germain, Mike Madden, Jim Simons, Elaine Peterson, Kathleen Wannigman, Richard Jensen, Susie Nelson, Mary Ellen Pratt, Florence Mase, Susan Burchfiel, Thelma Johnson, Dale Nelson, Garth Dietrich, Pat Olk, Patsy Shaughnessy, Pat Stinson, Betty Heiam, Art Heiam, John Menke, CW Cohen, David Sousen, Becky Langford, Bruce Langford, Howard Bastian, Andrew Kaske, Paula Smuda, Stephen Ullom, Mark Dalquist

I. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 14, 2000 PARK BOARD MINUTES

Dave Fredlund MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 14, 2000 PARK BOARD MINUTES. Andy Finsness SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. OLD BUSINESS - UPDATES

A. Skate Park - Mr. Keprios indicated that he recently met with the park directors from Bloomington and from Richfield plus Greg Hanks from the Southdale YMCA. He noted that they are all very receptive to the idea of a joint venture skate park. He commented that the Bloomington Recreation Department is meeting tonight with a group of kids and parents who are very interested in the topic and have even identified some of the sites within Bloomington. Also, they really like the idea of a joint venture at the YMCA to which they are primarily talking about a tier 2 level where the YMCA would run it, supervise it and cover all of the costs, including insurance. Mr. Keprios indicated that this would not preclude us from doing a tier 1 at one of our local parks to get the kids hooked on it and then move on to the more challenging tier 2 skate park at the YMCA. He pointed out that we may have to surrender some of our park land at Yorktown Park but that will be a subject for another Park Board meeting. We are making great progress

and the three jurisdictions are considering an indoor facility. He noted there are a lot of pluses here, in that there are two additional communities who are very interested in coming forward with some dollars to make this happen, there may be some donations that could be acquired, plus the YMCA is willing to operate the facility and assume all liability.

B. First Tier Trail - Mr. Keprios indicated that the architect has responded to the Park Board's wishes to look at some alternatives from 70th Street. They have made an alternate route up through 66th Street including Centennial Lakes and Yorktown Park, however, there are still some adjustments that need to be made. He noted that they hope to have this on the City Council agenda for one of the May or June meetings. At that time the architect and the people from Hennepin Parks will give a presentation.

C. Lewis Park Bandy and Soccer - Mr. Keprios indicated that at the last Park Board meeting staff was asked to explore some alternate surfaces for a possible joint use. He stated that he took that very seriously and has hired an architect as well as had some soil borings done at Lewis Park. He noted that a third party professional in field construction will give the Park Board recommendations. As a result, we will know whether or not a joint use for soccer and bandy is feasible.

D. Off-Leash Dog Site - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that a public meeting was held in the City of Minneapolis to which notices were only sent to Minneapolis residents even though the property is within the City of Edina limits. He indicated that Edina's Chief of Police did attend and told them that regardless of what they do they have to abide by Edina's ordinances. He stated that the Police Department sent out notices to Edina residents to inform them of the meeting at Linden Hills Park and there were some vocal Edina residents in attendance. Mr. Keprios noted that currently there isn't adequate parking. However, he doesn't know enough to render a professional opinion but he does feel at the very least they need to go through the process of coming before the Park Board and then on to the City Council. Mr. Keprios explained that the people from Minneapolis have not discussed this with him yet so he has set up a meeting with them, as well as the Park Director from St. Louis Park to review and discuss the proposed project.

E. Pamela Park Ponds - Mr. Keprios indicated that the memorandum from the Engineering Department is in regards to the storm water retention ponds and sanitary sewer lines that are being proposed for Pamela Park and Strachauer Park. This will also include some pathways that will be constructed throughout Pamela park. At the next Park Board meeting Wayne Houle, Assistant City Engineer, will give a formal presentation to which everyone will have a chance to respond to this issue.

F. City School Referendum - Mr. Keprios indicated that he just returned from a meeting with two of the City Council members, two school board members, the superintendent of schools, the city manager and a few others along with all of the architects and engineers. He explained that they have narrowed it down to what is in and what is out of the plan. However, we still have issues to resolve on the memorandum of understanding. Mr.

Housh asked what is the situation with the pool. Mr. Keprios indicated that the elected officials at the table indicated that the plan is to renovate the South View pool, fill in the existing pool at Valley View and build a brand new 25 yard by 25 meter 12 ft. deep pool with a diving well attached. Mr. Keprios also commented that the dome is included and they are going with option two. He stated that all of the Park Board's recommendations are in with the exception of the lighted tennis courts.

G. Donations/Memorials Policy - Mr. Keprios indicated that what this issue comes down to is plaques in the parks. The question becomes do you or don't you want plaques in the park system. Once they are in the ground or on a structure they are expected by the donor to be in place forever. He noted that today he took 11 photos of plaques at Wooddale Park alone. He commented that these are not all necessarily negative things but when there gets to be too many in a park system it starts to become a negative experience for park users and that's what the donations/memorial policy is all about. He stated that we don't want to discourage donations, but he would like for everyone to look over his proposal and think about it for next month's meeting. He noted that he has come up with ways to recognize donations, some of them on a more permanent basis and some of them not. Mr. Klus asked the Park Board members to bring their thoughts to next month's meeting so that a vote can be made and this item can get off of square one.

Ms. Presthus asked if there is anyone right now waiting to which Mr. Keprios replied there are some people waiting. He pointed out that there are definitely some people who will not donate if they don't receive a plaque in the park. Therefore, he feels we need to ask are those who are donating doing so to get a name on a plaque or are they truly doing it to improve the quality of their parks.

III. YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION PRESENTATIONS

A. Edina Girls Traveling Basketball - Jim Simons, President of the Edina Girls Traveling Basketball, indicated that they just finished their 2000 season and this year had their largest number of participants at 132 girls playing. He explained that mostly they've been working on trying to enhance the skill level of all the girls coming into the program. He pointed out that last year for the first time they sponsored a summer camp for several weeks in June and several weeks in August and will be doing that again this year. He indicated Girls Traveling Basketball is different from the Edina Girls Athletic Association Basketball, which is a house league. Their season runs the typical basketball season, October through early March. He explained that this year was the first year that the 9th grade program was turned over to the high school. He commented that they also work closely with Jenny Johnson at the high school.

Mr. Simons indicated that from his understanding there are some web sites that are being developed and they will be working with a student who has volunteered to help put together a web site for the Edina Girls Traveling Basketball. He asked if there is going to be any type of Park and Recreation Web site to which they could be part of because it would certainly be helpful for registration, scheduling, etc. Mr. Simons commented that

the big issue, as we all know, is the gym space and hopefully with the referendum things will work out. He stated that the Edina Girls Basketball is in support of the referendum and have informed the Park and Recreation staff to call them if they need their assistance in any way. He explained that they are looking at possibly cutting back the number of teams because of the lack of available gym times.

B. Edina Girls Fastpitch Association - Dick Glover, President of Edina Girls Fastpitch Association, explained that it's a non-profit corporation existing to provide a developmental program of an organized fastpitch softball for girls ages 8 through high school. He noted that some of the goals of the association are sportsmanship, understanding fair play, develop the ability to accept victory or defeat graciously, develop the individual's fastpitch skills to the best of their ability and develop team skills, knowledge of the game and an attitude of team participation loyalty and responsibility. He indicated that this year there are approximately 100 girls participating and therefore they are fielding 6 teams. He explained that their season runs from the first week of May through the early part of July.

Mr. Glover stated that the majority of their funding comes from player registration fees, their annual flower sale and their three Edina tournaments held at Van Valkenburg every year. He pointed out that one of the bigger challenges for Girls Fastpitch is going to be playing field accessibility, they realize that they are a small association, but in April and May playing fields get very crowded with fastpitch, slow pitch softball and adult softball. He stated that hopefully if the upcoming bond issue passes later this year it will help to relieve some of the congestion. He also noted that one of the reasons they really like to play at Pamela Park is because a couple of years ago they went in with the Edina Baseball Association and donated a batting cage next to the field at Pamela Park, therefore, the players can go in and hit a few pitches before their game where at other parks that is not an option.

Mr. Glover pointed out that many of the other communities that they compete against do not have slow pitch softball, all they have are traveling and in-house fastpitch teams. Therefore, it's tough for them to compete every year. However, the last three years alone they have had two different age level state champions, three other teams that have finished second place in state and one other team that has placed third in the state. He commented that they are an up and going program.

C. Edina Baseball Association - Dale Nelson, President of Edina Baseball Association, indicated that the purpose of the Edina Baseball Association is to provide many opportunities to learn to play baseball. This year there are nearly 1,100 participants registered. Their goal is for kids to learn to play baseball, have a lot of fun and promote a sense of personal accomplishment in learning the game as well as learning very important life values: leadership, cooperation, sportsmanship, and determination.

Mr. Nelson commented that currently the challenge with this many players has been the traveling program, at what age group should we have traveling baseball as well as should

we be cutting kids. He indicated that they currently have 13 traveling teams and 75 house teams. Mr. Nelson stated that they are trying to provide an opportunity for all kids to play baseball and the question is how do you select who plays at what level. Another question is how do we find the right number of fields for the right number of teams because more traveling teams have been added in order for more kids to have a chance to play traveling baseball. Mr. Housh asked if the baseball numbers have been growing over the last few years. Mr. Nelson replied that the numbers have stayed fairly constant.

Mr. Keprios noted that they have been working with all of the athletic associations to get a registration software package in place where Park and Recreation would literally handle all of the registrations. This way everyone in the community could register for all programs either by phone or internet. He noted that this would be a great service for the community and indicated that all of the athletic associations have given him the preliminary okay on this. At this point, we are waiting for a recent upgraded registration software package to be proven reliable in other test site communities before moving forward.

IV. GRANDVIEW SQUARE - SHERWOOD PARK

Mr. Keprios went through a brief power point presentation summarizing the Grandview Park/Sherwood Park project.

Mr. Keprios explained that some people refer to Sherwood Park as Richmond Hills Park because that was the name assigned to the development when it was built. He stated that regardless of how the project turns out he would like to see the current misleading sign removed and have a new “Richmond Hills Neighborhood” sign relocated more appropriately near the first private property line. He would like to place a new park identification sign in the park so that everyone knows it’s called Sherwood Park.

Mr. Keprios explained that Sherwood Park is just over 1 ½ acres and has a well building, playground area, picnic area, open play area and a non-scheduled ball field area. The park is not scheduled for anything unless someone has a permit for a neighborhood picnic or social function. Mr. Keprios commented that the park also serves as a buffer between the residential and commercial properties. He noted that Sherwood Park is classified as a mini-park which means it is less than 2 acres in size and is primarily there to serve pre-school age children. He pointed out that the larger parks with playing fields that are closest to Sherwood Park are Garden Park and Highlands Park. Mr. Keprios added that there are 11 mini-parks in Edina, each one a little bit different.

Mr. Keprios gave a little background on the property. He explained that the City purchased the property and then interviewed and received presentations from a variety of developers. He noted that the one chosen was Opus/Ron Clark, which is a terrific developer. At the time of their proposal it did not include use of any piece of Sherwood Park. However, what has happened between then and now is very important. The library indicated that they would not accept the proposal the way it was originally presented

because they wanted to have more visibility and if they didn't get that the deal was off. Therefore, the developers went back to the drawing board and came up with a better relocation for the combination senior center/library. Secondly, the City Council asked the developers to design a "town square" theme to the architecture of the development with a center park area. Therefore, this isn't the developers changing their mind, they are following the orders of the City Council and the current design is their response to the City Council's request. Mr. Keprios indicated that the surrounding neighbors have a vested interest in this development as well as the future residents of Grandview Square, which would include 190 units. He commented that we also have to look out for the interests of the future senior citizens and the future library patrons as well. Mr. Keprios pointed out that they still have to serve the interest of the Hennepin County Board because without their blessing there is no deal with the relocation of the library. Mr. Keprios explained that the reason why the library is a component of this development is because the city has a strong desire to capture the property next door to city hall because we are in desperate need of space to renovate city hall.

Mr. Keprios indicated that with the current plan there are a few positives and a few negatives. A negative is that he feels it appears that the playground equipment is too close to the road. The current plan also has a negative impact with regards to its function as a buffer and basically consumes too much park land in his view. Mr. Keprios indicated that in his view the open play area is an improvement. Also, the new pathway system that's part of the project is a positive addition. He pointed out that the access to the town square park will ultimately be a very big plus not just for the new residents but also for the existing residents. Mr. Keprios explained that as the park stands today it's approximately 1.55 acres and after the redevelopment of the open space it would become approximately 1.15 acres.

Mr. Keprios indicated that his recommendation to the Park Board would be that we should work further with the developers to explore all of the possible alternatives so we use less land and possibly even not use any existing park land at Sherwood Park. We need to exhaust every alternative that's available to us so that we don't consume any existing park. He noted that this is also in sync with what the planning commission is recommending as well. Mr. Keprios then showed some layouts of the area and explained that if the developers had a choice in the matter they would rather not take any of their park, they are following the directions of the City Council. There is a need to create enough tax increment in the district's remaining 10 years of existence so that we can build a public facility that is needed as part of the project.

Ron Clark explained that he would be building the residential portion of Grandview Square and the Opus Corporation would build the senior center, library and office building. Mr. Clark stated that they are marching to the City Council's request and in order to make the financial work they need to create this much real estate value which is approximately 190 units and an 80,000 sq. ft. office building. He noted that these numbers were proven by the city's tax increment financing consultant. Mr. Clark

commented that it's a difficult situation to satisfy the city's needs and respond 100% to the neighborhood.

Jack Buxell, from J. Buxell Architects, indicated that we need to put some of this into context, currently there are 47 existing residents but we are also dealing with 190 future residents as well as office building tenants as well as other surrounding residents who will potentially use this area. Mr. Buxell explained the area and noted that it will not only be available to the residents of this community but to the greater community as a whole. Therefore they are trying to provide, in a sense, a very holistic solution.

Mr. Buxell indicated to the residents that he can understand their perception that they are losing a facility. He explained that within the context of their charge they are trying to provide uses that are presently existing in the park. Although they can't provide them in exactly the same places, their hope is to provide very similar uses.

Mr. Buxell indicated that with the current plan they are trying to retain the uses that are now there with the play area and open field area. He noted that this will also be used by the community of condominium owners in the sense that this was part of the walking path system that they would use. He stated that they would do some enhancements around the perimeter in terms of sitting areas, flower beds, etc., that would bring another kind of level to the existing park facility.

Mr. Buxell explained that in a sense he thinks the residents feel they have been deceived. He noted that the initial plan that was proposed literally used the entire park and tried to relocate the park to the center of the development. When that was called into question they came back with a plan that stayed out of the park completely. Mr. Buxell pointed out that in the initial proposal the school bus barn was being moved out and that freed up land to generate additional tax increment dollars which allowed them to build additional underground parking. However, when the school district withdrew their offer, that option went away and they literally had to replace all of the underground parking onto the surface. Therefore, from a land consumption standpoint, this plan represents literally the best they can do in terms of building. Ultimately, they are all in agreement that this is a decision that the City Council has. Mr. Buxell stressed that he hopes everyone can see, in a sense, the degree to which they have tried to work with the existing community, provide for the future community and retain the uses that are there. He noted that really, in the long run, no one is short changed.

Jack Abrahamson, resident, complimented Mr. Keprios and noted that he has been maintaining the Richmond Hills sign for years and hangs the flag up and indicated that it would be wonderful to get a new sign. He then stated that he raises the opposition to the loss of a park of the neighborhood for a number of different reasons. He noted that it is redundant that they are up here battling again. He explained that they want a positive site to build on but they don't feel that downsizing the park and adding a town square is beneficial to the community. As they see it there are 47 homes there and to downsize the park and add 400 to 500 additional people who have the potential of using it not only

downsizes it in acreage or in size of square footage but it downsizes it tremendously with the amount of population. Mr. Abrahamson commented that it is his understanding when Richmond Hills was developed there was a requirement that there be a green area and if that area is taken away the little community is totally isolated. He noted that from the mailer that was sent out the little piece of green space that they have shown seems absolutely unreasonable as a place where their children and grandchildren can play. He noted that someone needs to think this through again, there has got to be a better way. He noted that's their park, they can't go to another park and maybe that's being selfish, but it's the only green area they have in the immediate neighborhood. Mr. Abrahamson stated that for future generations they need to maintain what they have now for the good of the neighborhood, the children and grandchildren.

Mr. Klus indicated that he knows the green area is a big concern for all of us but asked Mr. Abrahamson what else he feels they will be losing besides the green space. Mr. Abramson replied that they are losing a configuration which puts them closer to the 300 plus residents who are also going to have the opportunity to use that green space. That in itself is an extreme competition compared to what is now there with 47 homes. To put that many new residents in that area, from his perspective, overburdens the amount of green space. There is going to be a tremendous amount of competition there.

Howard Bastian, resident, asked if the reason why you are not using the approved plan is because it is not financially workable. He noted that as he read the presentation it seems as though so much needs to be done in order for the numbers to work for the tax revenue. Mr. Buxell replied that the initial approved plan did not take any of Sherwood Park because it included a parking garage that would be replacing the bus facility and therefore freed up land to generate tax increment revenues. and then that generated money which then put parking underground. However, with the garage no longer part of the overall project that revenue has to be replaced within the development.

John Menke, resident, indicated that he lives right across the street from Sherwood Park and will be looking at a 48 ft. building. He then asked the Park Board to please reject the current Opus Park proposed development plans and instruct them to submit a revised plan that takes no land at Sherwood Park. He stated that this park has been a buffer to the neighborhood from one and two story high low impact commercial buildings which are going to be replaced with over 40 ft. high buildings. He noted that this plan is coming much closer to the neighborhood than any other plan ever brought before them. Mr. Menke commented that he has lived in Edina for 22 years and at his current residence for 10 years. He explained that he built his house because it was near a small neighborhood park. He noted that he used to live near Chowen Park and can't imagine the city putting a 50 ft. building over there. Mr. Menke pointed out that this is the only developer that ever proposed taking park land since he has lived in Edina as well as the only one the City Council that has proposed taking park land. Again, Mr. Menke asked the Park Board to instruct the developers to come back with something different.

Rich Dahlquist, resident, indicated that he has been an Edina resident for 25 years and has two small children and uses the park regularly. He asked why would the City Council approve the plan that was submitted last fall when the library and senior center had apparently not been consulted as to whether or not it was acceptable. However, if they did then why didn't they make the adjustments before the plan was approved by the City Council to go ahead. He noted that if this was the plan that was on the table last fall he doubts considerably that the City Council would have ever approved it. He stated that he finds it very irresponsible of the developers and of the City Council, if they were a party to this, to approve that plan without giving the senior center and library involved up front with their approval. Mr. Dahlquist stated that when he looks at the town square he sees that as a "feels good" place from people who don't live in the area. He asked why not take the building that's proposed on the park and build a square condo building where the town square is. He stated that when you look at the southern part of the site there are other ways that the space could be twisted around and re-used and town square could be a parking lot. Mr. Dahlquist asked who will control the use and regulate the access to the town square. Mr. Keprios replied that the town square would become the property of the City of Edina and that the new residents and office tenants would pay a fee to help maintain it. However, as far as controlling access it would be a public park and anyone can use it just like any of the other public parks.

Garth Dietrich, resident, commented that he doesn't think it's fair that because the School District won't relocate the bus garage and now the residents are paying for it. They are losing their park to pay for something that the city had approved otherwise. Their property value is not going to go up by staring at a 50 ft. building.

Pat Stinson, resident, indicated that if you look at how many condos are being proposed there will be four times as many people compared to how many are now there with approximately only 30% of the land. He noted that is not counting the library, senior center and office building. He stated that it seems short-sided because you think you are getting something for free but by putting too much concentration there you are not getting it for free. He noted that he thinks it would be smarter to cut down the size and maybe raise some bonds. He stated that he doesn't mind paying a little more in taxes to have better aesthetics and a better neighborhood. Again, he noted that it is just too short-sided to see four times as many people in that small of an area.

Pat Olk, resident, stated that he has lived in this neighborhood almost ten years and uses the park a lot. He noted that town square will not compensate for the loss of the park. He asked the Park Board to please not accept this proposal.

Elaine Peterson, resident, indicated that she feels totally entrapped by this huge, unattractive building. She noted that when Mr. Clark proposed the initial plan cutting down the size of the park was not even a consideration. Ms. Peterson commented that she doesn't know where else in Edina there is a four story building backed up like this into a residential area. This is definitely going to depreciate their property value.

Mr. Klus indicated that he appreciates all of the comments from the neighborhood group and from the developers and architects.

Mr. Housh stated that there were a lot of issues discussed, some had to do with parks and some had to do with other things. However, as a Park Board we are concerned about the use of the parks, that is our main focus. Mr. Keprios commented that the issue before you is the proposed use of existing park land for Sherwood Park. Mr. Housh indicated that Mr. Keprios' recommendation is that as a Park Board we encourage the developers to go back and look again and try to find a way to not lose existing park space. Mr. Keprios commented that his recommendation to Park Board is to make a recommendation to the City Council that encourages us to work further with the developer to explore every possible alternative so that we don't have to use any existing park land.

Ms. Sitek asked whose recommendation is the town square and where did that idea come from. Mr. Keprios replied that it was a direction from the City Council.

Mr. Finsness asked what the proposed price range is for the condominiums. Mr. Clark responded \$200,000 to \$400,000.

Mr. Fredlund asked what would be the configuration of these units, two bedroom, three bedroom, etc., and who will be occupying these places. Mr. Clark replied that he thinks it will be a pretty diverse group of people although he feels the number one perspective buyer will be the empty-nesters or early retirees. He indicated the plan includes some two-story town homes as well as a one level flat condominiums.

Mr. Finsness asked if there are any laws in place about taking existing park land. Mr. Keprios replied there is an old policy on the books that states we should do everything in our power to avoid having to surrender and/or sell park land. It's basically a policy to give a vision to the future city councils to try to work toward that goal knowing that it may not always be possible. Mr. Keprios indicated that the intent of the existing policy is to have a no net loss in existing park land.

Ms. Sitek stated that she has a problem with the town square being used to supplement the land that's being taken. She noted that as a mother of four she knows that the people who will be living in the condominiums are not going to want children running around the square. She worries that this is not going to be park property in the real sense of a park.

Mr. Keprios commented that if the town square park concept is approved by the City Council as it rests today it will likely be a passive park, a place for people to picnic, small gatherings and outdoor library classes. It will most likely not serve as an active park.

Andy Finsness MOVED THAT PARK BOARD TAKE MR. KEPRIOS RECOMMENDATION VERBATIM, THAT IT'S OUR RECOMMENDATION THAT WE ASK THE DEVELOPERS TO LOOK FURTHER WITH THE CITY TO EXPLORE

OTHER POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES IN EFFORTS TO SACRIFICE EVEN LESS AND IF POSSIBLE NONE OF THE EXISTING PARK LAND AT SHERWOOD PARK.

Linda Presthus SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mr. Klus commented that he never wants to see park land taken away. It's a tough thing to take park land away especially since we fight so hard for our green areas and at the same time he hears the tax increment financing issues that the city has placed upon the developer. The developers have to develop so much revenue to support what they are trying to do and these are tough issues for both the city and the developer. The developers are at the mercy of the City in a lot of ways. He indicated that he is in support of the motion and is hopeful that there is some way that we can do less impact upon the neighborhood and less impact upon this park. He noted that adding this town square feeling is nice and it's going to look great but it's not going to be functional and the functionality of our parks is a big issue.

Mr. Keprios pointed out that he never intended to imply that the town square was going to be a replacement for what was lost at Sherwood Park. The two parks will likely have very different functions altogether.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ADJOURNMENT

Scott Housh MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:25 P.M. Karla Sitek SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED.